

Cell Phone Tour Scripts – Individual Stop Scripts

Version: Spring 2014

General Greeting

Welcome to the Flight 93 National Memorial Cell Phone Tour. Tour stops are indicated by signs throughout the park. Stops range from under a minute to approximately 5 minutes. If you have a smart phone, you can explore the memorial's mobile website by scanning QR (Quick Response) codes on these signs. To leave feedback, press *0. Thank you again for visiting Flight 93 National Memorial.

A Mining Landscape – Plant-a-Tree Tour Stop 701

A field in Western Pennsylvania. What images does this phrase bring to mind? Farms? Meadows? A reclaimed coal mine? Seams of bituminous, or soft coal, underlie much of this region, including this memorial, and the process of mining for that coal has greatly shaped this land. Coal is mined in two ways: deep mining, the sinking of a mineshaft and then mining the seams underground, or surfacing mining, removing the layers from above. Both of these methods were conducted here. Technology, geology, and market value influenced the choice of methods. Surface mining began here in the 50s, but only the top two seams were mined. Deep mining occurred under the ridge along the northeastern boundary of the memorial.

By the 70s, a combination of demand and improved technology allowed for deeper surface mining, reaching the fourth and fifth seams. Blasting and huge excavators, called draglines, made deep cuts hundreds of feet deep. Roads, houses, woodlands, and earth were removed to expose the coal. Earth was stacked in enormous rows alongside the cuts, and later used as backfill. Coal was trucked out via a Haul Road, then onward to factories and power plants. The haul rd is now route you drove along from the entrance to the Visitor Center site. This work provided much needed jobs for the region. Coal was important to the development of industries like steel, which fueled the growth of the country, but the use of coal has also impacted the environment.

When the mines closed, reclamation of this land, a process mandated by law, began. The deep mine portals were sealed off. The open cuts left dangerous high walls of bedrock exposed and so were filled. When Flight 93 crashed, it impacted in a portion of backfill allowing the plane to drive deep into the earth and collide with a buried rock highwall. During the backfill process, the contours of the land were restored as close as possible to the way they were before the mines. Ponds were created to treat acid mine drainage. Next came the planting of coarse

grasses and pines, resulting in the rolling open grasslands that surround you, a landscape not naturally occurring in the Alleghenies.

Reclamation is on ongoing process; this landscape was left with little topsoil, stunting the growth of woodlands and acid mine drainage still requires treatment to protect local streams, but efforts are underway to help boost this renewal.

What are your thoughts on the legacy of mining?